

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): An apparatus, for heat-processing a mask substrate, comprising:

a heating plate for heating the mask substrate, the heating plate including a front surface facing the mask substrate, the mask substrate disposed on a first side of the heating plate, the mask substrate including a side surface;

heating means for heating the heating plate; and

a frame member disposed on the first side of the heating plate so as to overlap the heating plate as viewed from the first side, the frame member including an inner peripheral surface directly opposite the side surface of the mask substrate such that a first clearance is disposed between the inner peripheral surface and the side surface, the frame member being detachably supported by the heating plate so that the frame member is disposed around the mask substrate, and the frame member and mask substrate are disposed within a same plane that is parallel to the front surface of the heating plate.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the inner peripheral surface is curved in a concave shape.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the inner peripheral surface is curved in a convex shape.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 3, wherein the inner peripheral surface is a mirror surface.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 3, wherein the inner peripheral surface is a rough surface.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): An apparatus, for heat-processing a mask substrate, comprising:

- a heating plate for heating the mask substrate, the heating plate including a front surface facing the mask substrate, the mask substrate including a side surface;

- heating means for heating the heating plate;

- a frame member, having an inner peripheral surface directly opposite the side surface of the mask substrate such that a first clearance is disposed between the inner peripheral surface of the frame member and the side surface of the mask substrate, the frame member being detachably disposed above the heating plate so that the frame member is disposed around the mask substrate, and the frame member and mask substrate are disposed within a same plane that is parallel to the front surface of the heating plate; and

- a driving mechanism configured to move the frame member so that a distance between the frame member and the side surface of the mask substrate placed on the heating plate varies in a direction perpendicular to the side surface.

Claim 8 (Original): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 7, further comprising:

- means for detecting a temperature of the mask substrate; and

a controlling portion for controlling the driving mechanism in accordance with the detected temperature.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 8, wherein the controlling portion determines whether the temperature of the mask substrate is in an increasing state or in a constant state in accordance with the detected temperature, controls the driving mechanism so that the distance between the frame member and the side surface of the mask substrate placed on the heating plate becomes a first distance when the temperature of the mask substrate is in the increasing state and a second distance smaller than the first distance when the temperature of the mask substrate is in the constant state.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the frame member is divided along the inner peripheral surface in a peripheral direction of the mask substrate placed on the heating plate.

Claim 11 (Canceled).

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the mask substrate is an approximately square glass substrate having a side surface ~~[[of]]~~ six inches long, and

wherein the heating plate is a circular plate for heating a semiconductor wafer having a diameter of 10 inches.

Claims 13-14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a supporting portion for movably supporting the frame member so that a second clearance is formed between the frame member and the heating plate.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 15, wherein the frame member and the supporting portion comprise material having a heat conductivity.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a heater, different than the heating means, disposed in the frame member.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a clearance between the frame member and the front surface of the heating plate.

Claims 19-20 (Canceled).